



## Maria College alumni celebrate their Golden Anniversary

The Maria College is a school that now educates over 500 children on a daily basis, both boys and girls, but the “Class of 56” was only twenty-seven young women who kept in contact and maintained their friendships over the past fifty years.

Three reside in Holland, and three are deceased, but the twenty-one women still living in Aruba gathered to share Sunday Mass at the Santa Filomena Church in Paradara and then a delightful lunch at Ventanas Del Mar in the Tierra Del Sol Country Club this past weekend. During the mass, women from their group, Christina van den Berg de Freitas recited a poem from the dais, and Clemente de Cuba the Epistle.

Fifty years of steadfast friendship is certainly a reason to celebrate, and so they did, reminiscing about the Dominican nuns that educated them, and the two-day trip it took in those times to travel by air to Holland to continue their education. A table of memorabilia from their school days lined a wall at the Tierra Del Sol with their exercise books filled with the perfect penmanship of dedicated students determined to further themselves in life by doing and learning the best they could.

Faustina Frank, one of the organizing committee of five welcomed all the ladies, who sat in a special room arranged by the restaurant so they could enjoy the spectacular view. The other organizers included Yvonne Spellen, Eveline Bronswinkel, Emilia Caster and Magdalena Luydens. They exchanged small gifts that sparked memories of days gone by, such as copies of pages from books in which they wrote their final messages to each other upon graduation, still kept by many of them as treasured mementos.

The “Maria College ‘56” as they call themselves went on to lives of great accomplishment, with many of them involved in community activism and service, including Ulrica Arends, who is Acting Governor of the island when His Excellency, Governor Refunjol is off-island.

It was a wonderful morning celebration of worship and friendship and sharing good company, and they each took away a special bookmark made by Yvonne Spellen to remind them of what was then a great achievement, especially for young women, and how they all strived to be the best they could be.

Congratulations to “Maria College ‘56” on your Golden Jubilee!